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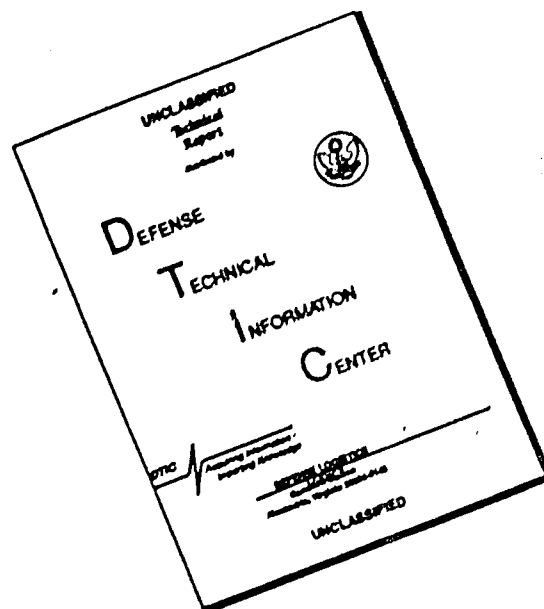
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COMBAT EXPERIENCES



1-70

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**UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
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MACJ3-052

1 April 1970

SUBJECT: MACV Combat Experiences 1 - 70

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1. This publication, which describes selected combat experiences in Vietnam, is part of a continuing program of information exchange among Allied forces in Vietnam.

2. The techniques, procedures and ideas presented are not new or revolutionary but may be of value in planning for current operations or modifying procedures now in effect. Comments or suggestions concerning this publication should be addressed to this headquarters, attention MACJ3-052.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

J. F. Harris
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4 Incl

1. MACV Combat Experiences 1-70
2. Distribution
3. List of Vietnam Lessons Learned
4. List of MACV Combat Experiences

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MACV COMBAT EXPERIENCES 1-70 TACTICAL COVER AND DECEPTION

1. (U) Introduction: Tactical C&D continues to be employed in the RVN with varying degrees of success. The enemy's intelligence gathering system continues to be highly efficient. The proper use of C&D, coupled with the highest degree of operational security, can provide tactical advantages in any encounter and bring subsequent defeat to the enemy. This publication describes selected combat experiences on the subject of Cover and Deception (C&D) in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). Contained herein is information which has been consolidated from quarterly reports submitted by subordinate units as required by MACV Directive 525-26.

2. (C) Purpose: The purpose of this publication is to report various combat experiences from selected units in the field in order to inform commanders of the C&D techniques employed. It is not intended that these techniques be accepted as doctrine. They should be considered, analyzed in their proper perspective and adapted to unit requirements if thought applicable and desirable.

3. (C) Friendly Operations: Although no major C&D operation has been conducted in recent months, various units have employed C&D techniques worthy of mention. The following examples are a few of those reported.

a. Airmobile Operations:

- (1) False Insertions: False insertions are normally conducted by a company or another small unit, utilizing aircraft feigning an insertion into a likely landing zone (LZ). Subject to mission requirements and blade time, helicopters will land at several LZs only one of which will be used to actually insert troops. Some LZs were prepared with artillery, ground units were inserted, remained on the ground for a short period of time, and were then lifted off and inserted into the true LZ. Several of these operations proved successful in deceiving or confusing the enemy as to the actual location of maneuver units.
- (2) False Extractions: False extractions have been employed to deceive the enemy into thinking that friendly forces have vacated an area. They are normally conducted by company or smaller units. The extraction is accomplished by feigning an extraction from a likely pickup zone. In areas where vegetation restricts direct observation, aircraft will go through the procedures of troop extraction while actually leaving troops in the area who then set up ambushes. To be effective, however, some personnel must board the helicopters so that the enemy can see troop silhouettes in the helicopter doors. This leads the enemy to believe that troops are no longer in the area and makes him vulnerable to ambush. These operations have been successful in con-

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fusing or deceiving the enemy as to the exact location of maneuver units.

- (3) Insertions Covered by Extractions: These operations, sometimes referred to as Daisy Chain Operations, have been extremely successful in deceiving the enemy as to the size, identity and disposition of friendly forces. These operations simulate an extraction of forces while in reality a fresh unit is placed into the area. Ranger teams ride into a pickup zone on the floor of the pickup ships as the aero-rifles are extracted. The aero-rifles can be seen in the helicopters and this leads the enemy to conclude that friendly forces have departed and it is safe to move. This has resulted in several successful ambushes.
- (4) Insertions Covered by Smoke: In those areas where the enemy is able to observe and adjust rocket and mortar fire on LZs, artillery batteries fire smoke rounds into predetermined areas, or helicopters lay a blanket of smoke along the most vulnerable side(s) of the landing zone. This obscures the enemy's vision and his ability to observe the insertion is greatly reduced.
- (5) Insertion of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP): several LRRP insertions were carried out in conjunction with aero-rifle platoons. Utilizing this technique, a LRRP and the platoons are combat assaulted into an area. Later in the day these are extracted while the LRRP remains. This tactic has provided successful security and deception for long range reconnaissance patrol activities.
- (6) Through multiple insertions at varying locations with a varying amount of time spent on the ground at each location, commanders covered a wide area with a minimum of force. Since the enemy did not know the time or place of the insertion, this technique served to keep the enemy off balance.
- (7) Units have conducted operations using airlifted artillery and air cavalry elements. These raid-type operations are labeled "Artillery Raids" and "Cavalry/Artillery Raids" and have capitalized upon the intrinsic flexibility and mobility of the airmobile division to provide distinct cover and deception. The direction and time of the attack by artillery fire and assault by air cavalry elements were successfully concealed from the enemy. Four raids by tube artillery, eight aerial rocket artillery raids, and one

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cavalry/artillery raid were conducted with good results. In most cases ground sweeps of the target areas resulted in the capture of enemy material and indicated that the enemy had sustained personnel casualties. The "Cavalry/Artillery Raid" technique not only provides surprise but is an effective economy of force measure; air cavalry can initially secure the fire base, reconnoiter target areas and adjust fire while the aero-rifle platoon can conduct immediate ground reconnaissance and damage assessment following the attack.

- (8) Dummy LZ artillery preparations employed in conjunction with fake insertions were frequently employed as a measure to deceive the enemy as to the actual LZs. A total of nine dummy preparations were fired in support of corps units during the reporting period. All units are of the opinion these operations directly contributed to the accomplishment of their mission.
- (9) Fake insertions and extractions were also used by maneuver battalions (and smaller elements) to deceive the enemy as to actual strengths and locations of friendly forces. Examples of different types of these operations are:
 - (a) One company conducted a partial extraction leaving a stay-behind sniper team. The enemy assumed that the entire unit had been picked up and the area was clear. The sniper team then successfully engaged the unsuspecting enemy force when it entered the area in daylight.
 - (b) One battalion also used the following false extraction techniques: Two soldiers per helicopter, each equipped with two cardboard manshaped silhouettes, were loaded in a secure area free from enemy observations. Upon departure from the secure area, the troops lay on the floor of the aircraft concealing the silhouettes. During the approach to the LZ the aircraft used all normal procedures. The aircraft landed in the LZ while the troops already on the ground staged the fake pickup. Upon liftoff the troops already in the aircraft erected the cardboard silhouettes, giving the appearance of loaded aircraft departing the LZ. Those remaining on the ground concealed themselves in the LZ vegetation and prepared to ambush any unsuspecting enemy who would follow into the seemingly vacant LZ. Suppressive fires prudently directed to the sides of the LZ were used to add realism to the pickup and to draw attention to the fake extraction. One unit used this technique to surprise the enemy who moved into a seemingly deserted LZ.
 - (c) Clandestine insertions/extractions which are variations

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of the techniques of conducting false insertions and extractions were frequently employed. In one variation one force relieves another, but maximum effort is made to deceive the enemy into thinking that only an extraction has occurred. This technique is frequently used to insert long range patrols from the ranger company and 6-man reconnaissance teams from the maneuver battalions. Usually the personnel being inserted remain on the floor of the aircraft as it makes a steep descent into the LZ, then rollout quickly into concealed ambush positions as the team being relieved mounts the helicopter and departs the LZ. This technique was used during three highly successful operations.

- (10) One battalion conducted a successful stay-behind force operations employing the battalion reconnaissance platoon. This platoon was airlifted to the field location of one company four days prior to the departure of that company. Upon departure of the company from the LZ the reconnaissance platoon remained hidden in ambush position and engaged an unsuspecting enemy force which entered the area believing all friendly forces had gone.

b. Ground operations:

- (1) Night Defense: During operations rifle companies are normally resupplied every three to five days. This is usually done just prior to dusk. After receiving supplies, companies move one (1) to one and a half (1 1/2) kilometers away from the resupply site and establish night ambush positions. This helps deceive the enemy as to the exact location of the unit until contact is made.
- (2) Stay-Behind Snipers: As a patrol or reconnaissance party moves through a known enemy area, a sniper team is dropped off where it can cover the patrol's route. Long range accuracy and small size enable the team to engage, with relative safety, small groups of enemy who will try to follow the patrol.
- (3) Stay-Behind Ambush: The same technique as above is followed but using a larger element in areas where the long range accuracy of the sniper cannot be utilized or where the enemy normally operates in large groups.
- (4) Village Seal Operations: During the reporting period there were several village seal operations in which C&D tactics were utilized. For one of these operations a false operations plan was produced and allowed to pass

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into VC information channels. The plan called for a seal of a village and extensive ground reconnaissance in a nearby village. Ground reconnaissance was prohibited in the immediate area and aerial reconnaissance was restricted to a straight flight over the village. One evening the seal elements occupied an area near the next village for about six hours prior to moving into the real target village. In addition, reconnaissance platoons performed extensive area reconnaissance nearby as part of the deception plan. The participating units were scattered throughout the AO and were not moved to the objective area until the last minute. Normal interdiction artillery fire was utilized to mask the sound of the troops approaching. During the seal, one company set up a dummy command post using a well-lit tent, radio antenna masts, and silhouettes in an attempt to draw the VC into a kill zone. Although the enemy might have been aware of the intensive GVN-ARVN-US planning efforts and any significant changes in allied force density, an imaginative deception plan prevented the enemy from taking protective measures or fleeing from the area. Deception measures made use of existing patterns of activity to make the plan credible to the enemy. The results of the operation were: 23 VC KIA, 2 VC KIA (Poss), 17 POW, 16 Hoi Chanh, 11 draft dodgers, 32 individual weapons, 6 crew served weapons, 1,785 small arms rounds, 72 artillery/mortar rounds, 15 grenades, 4 claymore mines, 20 tunnels, 20 bunkers, 1,121 kg rice, and 37 M-79 rounds.

- (5) Target Reconnaissance: When reconnoitering targets for raids or intelligence exploitation, care is taken not to draw attention to the target area by close aerial observation. Aerial reconnaissance is fitted into other aerial operations or routines or done from the periphery of the area. Hand held cameras are used to obtain working photographs of the target and surrounding area. In ground reconnaissance operations the routes into and out of the objective are varied.
- (6) Artillery Operations:
 - (a) False Preparations: Prior to commencement of an operation, artillery batteries fire false preparations into locations other than the ones to be used by the maneuver force. This has been successful in preventing the enemy from being alerted to friendly operations in a given area.
 - (b) Reconnaissance of fire support bases preceding occupation by artillery units alerts the enemy to planned friendly operations. To preclude this, reconnaissance is only accomplished when absolutely necessary and then false and multiple reconnaissance of fire support

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bases and routes are used to deceive the enemy. Artillery units make maximum use of helicopters when reconnoitering firing positions and routes of march. When it is necessary to make reconnaissance, it is usually conducted 24 to 18 hours prior to the physical occupation by the firing elements. Utilization of aircraft in lieu of wheeled vehicles whenever the tactical situation allows has greatly reduced the possibility of compromising the scheduled move and occupation. It has also increased the possibility of the firing elements arriving in position and becoming operational before the enemy or local civilian populace becomes cognizant of the units' presence.

- (c) Fire support bases are occupied at the last possible time, consistent with security requirements and the availability of transportation. The batteries are moved by platoon elements utilizing different routes and methods of conveyance, i.e., combination of road convoy and airmobile transport.
 - (d) Repetitious planned fires provide the enemy with a basis on which they can plan their operations. To preclude this, planned fires, times of fires, number of rounds and placement of fires are selected at random. Thus, the enemy is unable to establish a pattern on which to plan his operations.
 - (e) Continuous emphasis is being placed on repairs and construction of physical barriers and berms which restrict direct observation by enemy personnel and aid in reducing the amount of intelligence available for use in pre-planning attacks against friendly firing positions.
 - (f) Frequent Changes in the Location of Defensive Devices Such as Claymores and Fougasse: This precludes the enemy from gaining an accurate knowledge of the emplacement of defensive devices and decreases the possibility of surreptitiously neutralizing defensive devices to support ground sapper attacks.
- (7) Use of Specialized Equipment: The following types of specialized equipment has been used by all levels of command to assist in cover and deception:
- (a) Sniper scopes and rifles.
 - (b) Starlight scopes.
 - (c) Pink filter for search lights.

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(d) Sound activated equipment.

(e) Secure communication equipment.

(f) Personnel radar.

(8) Passive Measures: The following passive measures have been used by all levels of command to assist in cover and deception:

(a) Preplanned changes from primary to alternate frequency on tactical nets at designated time intervals.

(b) Movement at night.

(c) Camouflaged uniforms and equipment.

(d) Radio operator training in security methods.

(e) Light and noise discipline.

c. Operations Initiated and Conducted by Units of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN):

The ARVN has demonstrated the effective employment of C&D techniques which stand out by their originality, mode of application and good results. The following experiences are a few of those reported and show the degree of advancement of the C&D effort within the ARVN:

(1) Prior to August 1969, one of the ARVN Divisions on the Delta had conducted its helicopter assaults in the morning hours varying the time by a few hours. In August the assets were requested for the afternoon and insertions were made from 1500-1730 hours. In addition, units were utilized that had been confined to small areas on security and pacification missions. The observed movement of eligible male suspects within areas of operation indicated that the enemy was completely surprised and did not expect an operation at that time of the day.

(2) During the last two weeks of October, the same division was preparing to move to a new area of operations. During this time, extensive planning was carried out in the division's headquarters. As a deceptive measure, false plans and overlays were prepared that indicated movement to another area.

(3) In all of their combat operations, the division has experienced difficulty in closing in and destroying the enemy. The enemy has been employing, in a successful manner, tactics designed to delay his forces so his main body can evade. In Nov 69, one regiment carried out an operation where the primary mission was a ground-mobile

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combat sweep and the secondary mission was an air-land assault. They had received intelligence of an enemy battalion located close to an element of the regiment. An operation plan was prepared where the nearby element would sweep the area on foot and another element would be inserted in an adjacent woodline and move toward the first. Interrogation of POW's revealed that the unit on the ground sweep caught the enemy while they were watching the insertion into the adjacent woodline. As a result a battalion headquarters and heavy weapons company were overrun with 70 enemy KIA's and many weapons captured.

- (4) The division also uses the tactic of marking false LZs. As the command and control (C&C) helicopter orbits an area reconning for a LZ, sites other than the actual LZ are marked with smoke. This deceives the enemy as to actual LZ location prior to the helicopters landing.
- (5) When directing gunships with a C&C ship enemy positions are marked with smoke and then guns fire on the marked area. They have been able to flush the enemy from an area where he is suspected to be but have not actually seen him when making a pass with the C&C and dropping smoke.
- (6) Overlay changes: In periodic instances, overlays are prepared to be used in a particular area or district, and then the overlay itself is switched to an alternate area or district in which the operation is actually conducted.
- (7) Non-Overlay mission: In some instances, operations are planned without overlays or with completely false overlays. In such instances, only personnel running the operation know the targets.
- (8) LZ manipulations: As a tactical maneuver, assault teams may be landed in a LZ without troop deplaning, and then lifted, landed, and deployed in a different area. Sometimes these dual LZ landings may be juxtaposed across a canal containing enemy bunkers. By using this technique, the VC are deceived as to the strength and deployment of ARVN forces.
- (9) In Sep 69, an ARVN regiment, while in a well prepared night location employed "Straw Men" to deceive the enemy. A battalion was attacked by a sapper element supported by mortars and B-40 rockets. The enemy was not successful in penetrating or causing significant casualties because most of the enemy fire was directed against "Straw Men".

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The ARVN commander had directed the positioning of the straw dummies after darkness (class X uniforms that had been stuffed with straw). The "Straw Men" were set up in easy to locate positions around the defensive perimeter. The results: The enemy attack was successfully aborted and friendly casualties were minimized.

4. (C) Enemy operations: The VC/NVA continue to show their prowess in the employment of C&D techniques. The following examples describe a few of their experiences:

- a. In October 1969, a company of an ARVN Regt. was conducting a search and clear operation when it came upon an enemy bunker complex. Not seeing any movement or sign of enemy activity a friendly platoon began to move toward the complex. At this time an unarmed NVA soldier appeared acting as if he was trying to escape. The platoon leader and a squad leader gave immediate pursuit at which time a larger, well concealed force sprang an ambush. Results were 1 friendly KIA and 1 friendly WIA. Friendly troops must be aware of the possibility that the enemy will employ a decoy to lure them into an ambush.
- b. The enemy's habit of checking abandoned US Fire Support Bases can be exploited by the use of the stay-behind technique. In Oct 69, a US battalion dismantled a fire support base (FSB) and the artillery and infantry elements were extracted. The evening prior, the reconnaissance platoon set up an ambush approximately 200 meters from the FSB, they remained in place while the rest of the friendly elements were extracted. The next day enemy forces began searching the dismantled FSB. The ambush was sprung and supporting fires employed, resulting in 26 enemy KIA.
- c. Cover and deception methods employed by the enemy during the reporting period were:
 - (1) Paralleling old trails to avoid ambush sites.
 - (2) Moving supplies primarily at night during the period 1730 hours until 2400 hours.
 - (3) Varying supply routes.
 - (4) Reports also state that the enemy has avoided contact but has kept friendly forces under surveillance by means of LZ watchers and observing from a distance by 1 to 3-man forces. The enemy is reported to trail friendly elements for days, studying friendly remain-over-night (RON) positions, methods of selecting defensive positions, employment of mines and trip flares as well as time phasing. When the enemy detects a pattern, he will attack. Friendly units conducting extended company-size operations avoid

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patterns and often change their RON positions after overtly selecting and preparing the initial position. In several instances, this technique has saved countless lives since the initial RON position was accurately plotted and came under enemy mortar fire.

5. (U) Results: It is very difficult to determine with any great degree of accuracy the full measure of success of these operations. It is also difficult to determine the reactions of enemy units as a direct result of cover and deception operations. However, the success realized is evidenced by the number of enemy killed and captured, the amount of enemy material destroyed and captured, the increase in kill ratio, and the lack of successful enemy initiated action. Indications are that the cover and deception techniques employed have been successful.

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1 - General Research Corp	
2 - CG, Marine Corps Base, Cp Pendleton	
2 - CG, Marine Corps Base, Cp Lejeune	
2 - CG, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego	
2 - CH, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island	
5 - CG, FMF, LANT	
5 - CG, FMF, PAC	
1 - CO, Landing Force Tng Comd, Pac	
1 - COMPHIBTRAPAC	
2 - CG, Marine Corps Dev & Ed Comd	
8 - CINCAL	
14 - CG, USARAL	
6 - CINCLANT	
5 - CINCLANTFLT	
3 - COMPHIBLANT	
3 - COMPHIBTRALANT	

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MACV LESSONS LEARNED INDEX

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
1	30 Mar 62	Heliborne Operation Cai Ngay, An Xuyen Province
2	30 Mar 62	Airmobile Operation in I Corps
3	11 Apr 62	Operation JUNGLE JIM
4	11 Apr 62	Ranger Task Force Operation in Vinh Binh Sector
5	11 Apr 62	Multi-Battalion Operation in Northern Tay Ninh Province
6	11 Apr 62	Operations in Phuoc Thanh Sector to Relocate Civilians
7	18 Apr 62	Operation DAN TIEN VIII
8	23 Apr 62	Operation CA CHEP
9	27 Apr 62	Operation in Kien Hoa Sector
10	1 May 62	VC Ambush-Trung Lap, Binh Duong Province
11	5 May 62	Operation TIGER HUNT
12	10 May 62	Operation RAINDROP
13	16 May 62	Operation NGUYEN HUE
14	Undated	Operation SON CA
15	15 Jun 62	Ambush Techniques
16	19 Jun 62	Review of Lessons Learned 1 - 15
17	25 Jun 62	Techniques Dealing with Airmobile Assaults
18	24 Jul 62	Tips and Combat Experiences

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19	31 Jul 62	Operation SUNRISE
20	27 Aug 62	Indiscriminate Use of Firepower
21	28 Aug 62	Ambush Techniques
22	8 Sep 62	Operations of US Army Helicopters
23	5 Oct 62	Operation BINH TAY
24	13 Nov 62	Airmobile Raids Against Superior Forces
25	17 Dec 62	Search Techniques
26	18 Jan 63	M113 Operations
27	28 Feb 63	Ambushes
28	18 Apr 63	Guidelines for Advisors
29	17 May 63	Ambush in BINH CHANH
30	17 Aug 63	Psywar and Civic Action Operations
31	27 Sep 63	Artillery Organization & Employment in Counterinsurgency
32	19 Oct 63	Eagle Flight Operations
33	29 Oct 63	Utilization of Military Dogs
34	30 Nov 63	Railway Security
35	10 Jan 64	Clear and Hold Operations
36	4 Feb 64	Fire and Maneuver
37	10 Feb 64	Vehicle Convoy Organization and Control
38	12 Mar 64	Area Saturation Operations
39	11 Mar 64	Ambush Operations
40	23 Mar 64	Corps Psywar/CA Operations Center
41	28 Jul 64	Operations of Seabee Technical Assistance Teams

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42	7 Oct 64	VC Employment of Land Mines
43	22 Dec 64	Combat Tips I
44	23 Jan 65	Elimination of Viet Cong Infrastructure
45	12 Feb 65	Viet Cong Tunnels
46	3 Mar 65	Recent Operations
47	30 Mar 65	River Assault Group Operations
48	7 Apr 65	Combat Tips II
49	13 Apr 65	Operation HOAI AN
50	13 Apr 65	Naval Conduct of Amphibious Operations
51	24 Apr 65	Operational Employment of Riot Control Munitions
52	22 Nov 65	Operational Employment of the Mity Mite Portable Blower
53	29 Sep 66	Viet Cong Improvised Explosive Mines and Booby Traps
54	27 Jan 66	The Battle of Ky Phu
55	15 Mar 66	The Battle of Annihilation
56	18 Apr 66	Operations Against Tunnel Complexes
57	25 May 66	Pursuit
58	20 Jun 66	Operation HAPPY VALLEY
59	13 Jul 66	Employment of Image Intensification
60	5 Oct 66	Defense Against Mortar/Recoilless Rifle Attacks
61	27 Jan 67	Salient Lessons Learned
62	11 Mar 67	Salient Lessons Learned

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63	25 Apr 67	Search and Rescue Operations
64	15 Sep 67	Imitative Communications Deception
65	20 Oct 67	Population and Resources Control
66	10 Nov 67	Countermeasures for 102mm, 122mm and 140mm Rockets
67	4 Apr 68	Defense
68	20 Jul 68	Viet Cong Base Camps and Supply Caches
69	10 Sep 68	Analysis of Enemy Positions at Khe Sanh and Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Weapons Systems Against Enemy Fortifications
70	17 Oct 68	Friendly Casualties from Friendly Fires
71	13 Mar 69	Countermeasures Against Standoff Attacks
72	16 Nov 68	Aerospace Rescue and Recovery in South Vietnam
73	20 Nov 68	Defeat of VC Infrastructure
74	15 Sep 69	Accidental Herbicide Damage
75	20 Jan 70	Cordon and Search Operations
76	22 Nov 69	Vietnamization
77	To Be Published	Fire Support Coordination
78	17 Feb 1970	Action at Long Khot
79	To Be Published	Enemy Exploitation of Allied Tactical Communications

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MACV COMBAT EXPERIENCES INDEX

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECTS</u>
1 - 69	6 Jun 69	Defense Against Sapper Attacks; Sniper Training and Employment; Small Unit Operations.
2 - 69	29 Jul 69	Tactical Cover and Deception (C & D) in Counterinsurgency Operations.
3 - 69	7 Sep 69	Task Force Remagen; Experiences with Enemy B-40 and B-41 Rockets; Naval Forces Operations: Bridge Security Against Underwater Sapper Attack.
4 - 69	3 Nov 69	Bunker Busting/Land Clearing; Sapper Actions of North Vietnam Communists; FAC Operations; KBAR/VAMPIRE Concept; Anti-Rocket Program.
5 - 69	5 Jan 70	Viet Cong Attack on Regional Force Outpost; Pacification of Quang Dien District.
6 - 69	15 Jan 70	"To Build, Not to Destroy...", Air Ambush, Surveillance Task Force.

Requests for any MACV Lessons Learned or Combat Experiences should be addressed to the Defense Documentation Center, Attn: DDC-TCA, Cameron Station, Alexandria, Va. 22314.

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